

News and Information

From the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs

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**Weekly Column by David McCollum, Director
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Gang Up on Gas Guzzling

Gas prices are at a record high, and they could get higher this summer. Before you kick the pump or curse the gas station attendant, you should take some time to think through your options. There are a number of things you can do to reduce your fuel costs.

- Check your owner's manual to see what octane your car is designed to use. If you're buying a higher octane, you're paying for something you may not need. Use the recommended octane unless you've had engine trouble and been instructed by your mechanic to use something else.
- Be sure that your vehicle is properly maintained. Tires that aren't properly inflated will lower your gas mileage. Dirty, worn out air filters and old, gritty oil will hurt your vehicle's performance as well.
- Make the most of the gas you use by planning ahead. Combine your errands, and chose a route that will eliminate doubling back or other wasted travel. When you make stops, don't let the vehicle idle for more than a minute. Idling wastes more gas than restarting the engine. Also, use the air conditioner only when absolutely necessary.
- If your household has more than one vehicle, the car which gets the best gas mileage could be used by the family member with the longest commute. A 30-mile commute in an SUV that gets 17 mpg costs about \$27 a week at current gas rates. The same commute in a sedan that gets 25 mpg would cost only \$18 a week. You could save more than \$400 a year by swapping cars with your spouse!

If you have questions or concerns regarding any consumer issue, don't hesitate to contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-342-8385 or dca@mail.state.tn.us.